



Village Core Residents
Association
Richmond Hill, ON
VCRA2021@gmail.com

July 29, 2021

VIA EMAIL TO: kelvin.kwan@richmondhill.ca

Mr. Kelvin Kwan
Commissioner of Planning
City of Richmond Hill
225 East Beaver Creek
Richmond Hill, ON L4B 3P4

Re: Additional Comments on Development Applications D01-20014 and D02-20028

Dear Mr. Kwan,

Further to the letter of June 24, 2021 regarding the above captioned development applications, which was sent to you by Tony Faccia of our Association (copy attached), we recently received a copy of several first circulation comments on these applications and would like to submit the following additional comments.

It has been our contention since these applications were first reviewed that they propose excessive over-building on a site which contains existing significant natural features and green space.

Firstly, it is clear from the circulation comments that the proposed site plan does not provide for sufficient setbacks from the realigned watercourse. Three different departments or agencies have pointed out that there needs to be a *minimum* setback of 10 metres from the top of bank. We understand that in many cases where there is a watercourse on a site, a *greater* setback than the minimum is provided, to allow for a public pathway along the watercourse. Given that the applicant is proposing to re-route the watercourse to a location along the west side of the site, where it would be hidden between the development and the edge of the Alexander Mackenzie school property, we believe that it is critical to integrate a public path alongside the watercourse to allow public access to this green feature. Otherwise, there is no benefit being provided to the public, despite ownership and responsibility for ongoing maintenance of the watercourse being transferred to the City, supported by our tax dollars.

Further, the comments from Park & Natural Heritage Planning (PNHP) department indicate that because the parkland dedication requirement of over 500 m² cannot be achieved on this site, council should accept cash-in-lieu. We strenuously disagree with this approach, and note that it is inconsistent with the City's published environmental strategy, "Greening the Hill", wherein it states:

"Sustainable land development – including green development practices, design and infrastructure – will help minimize development impacts to the natural environment while addressing the needs of a growing community."

Given the location of this site adjacent to the Don Park to the west, we believe that, as a minimum, there must be some connection made to access it from Arnold Crescent (e.g. a pathway and bridge over the watercourse), and this connection should at least partially fulfill the required parkland dedication. Cash-in-lieu should only be accepted for that portion of the parkland dedication which cannot reasonably be integrated into the site design.

As for the balance of the site, we agree with the comments of the PNHP department which states that “the proposal does not provide for any meaningful opportunity for landscaping or tree planting” and recommends that “the zoning by-law amendment should seek to increase the available space within the site for tree planting and other landscaping”. The amount of built density and hardscapes proposed in the current applications are simply excessive.

Finally, we note from the comments that the applications propose to remove many City-owned trees and to potentially impact trees that are co-owned or on neighbouring properties. We feel that the City needs to be proactive in protecting as many existing trees as possible, and not simply accept cash-in-lieu or levy small fines which are of no deterrent to the developer. Again, this is consistent with the environmental strategies espoused in “Greening the Hill”, which seeks to “strengthen our natural heritage system by enhancing and restoring urban forest cover and native vegetation”.

Thank you very much for your consideration. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our concerns with you further, at your convenience.

Warm regards,

Brian Chapnik, PhD, PEng
Chair, Village Core Residents Association
VCRA2021@gmail.com

Attach

Cc: Anant Panel, PNHP
David West, Councillor Ward 4
Leigh Ann Penner, Senior Planner

Bcc: Village Core Residents Association